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ABSTRACT

This course in giving presentations developed especially for hospital employees is designed to be taught onsite and to complement a hospital's other training and staff development efforts. The topical focus is workplace communication. It is designed as an 8-hour course, with four 2-hour sessions. The curriculum guide consists of a list of course goals and informational materials, activities, and exercises for four sessions: good presentations, planning the presentation, polishing the presentation, and actual presentations. The teacher's guide explains the philosophy of the course. It lists course goals (including participant role, instructor role, and evaluation) and offers sample lesson plans. Each lesson plan has a brief narrative description of class activities and goals and a time plan. Each plan assumes a 2-hour class session and team teaching. The teacher's guide also describes how teachers can adapt the course to make it more work-related and more responsive to different audiences. Suggestions for recordkeeping conclude the guide. (YLB)

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Effective Presentations

An offering of Step *Ahead:*

A Partnership for Improved Health Care Communication

Sponsored by

The Hospitals of New Mexico
and
The Department of English
New Mexico State University

Revised 1/11/93

EFFECTIVE PRESENTATIONS was developed by **Step *Ahead*:** A Partnership for Improved Health Care Communication. **Step *Ahead*** is funded in large part by the U. S. Department of Education as a National Workplace Literacy Demonstration Project. Our other partners include The New Mexico Coalition for Literacy and seventeen hospitals within New Mexico.

Step *Ahead* brings short courses and on-site tutoring to hospitals. Our training project helps health care workers improve their job-related communication and literacy skills. As a demonstration project, we are eager to share our materials with others who are engaged in not-for-profit literacy work. If you would like to use our materials, please write for permission to:

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We gratefully acknowledge the assistance of our partner organizations and especially wish to thank our many students who told us it really did make a difference.

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Dr. Stephen A. Bernhardt and Dr. Paul R. Meyer, Co-Directors

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Effective Presentations
Course Plan

Session 1: Good Presentations

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- Characteristics of Good and Bad Presentations, p. 3
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- Read though course booklet, pp. 11-15

Session 2: Planning the Presentation

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Review Planning Worksheet, pp. 9-10
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Assignments:

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Session 4: Presentations

Give Presentations

Summarize and Evaluate Course

Introduction

Speaking in front of a crowd is never easy. If you are like most people, the minute you even think of getting up in front of a crowd, your mouth gets dry and your palms get wet. Your heart races, and it feels like your stomach is trying to climb out of your throat.

Fortunately, the condition is not fatal. Taking the time to learn a few techniques can help you build the confidence you need to become a polished presenter. *Effective Presentations* will show you how to plan a presentation that is interesting and informative. Once you have an effective framework, you will learn how to fill in the details. Then we will work on making your presentation more lively by using visual aids or handouts. At the end of class, you will get to practice your skills when you present your speech to your fellow students.

As you work through the next few pages, you will learn how to put together a solid presentation that you can deliver with confidence. There is no need to let panic take over. You can trade the panic for feelings of confidence and satisfaction because you know you have worthwhile things to say, and you will soon find out that getting up before a group is not that big a deal.

Making Effective Presentations
Course Goals

At the end of this course, participants should be able to:

- Prepare interesting and informative presentations
- Feel confident in their abilities as a public speaker
- Overcome nervousness
- Deliver presentations in a lively manner
- Use visual aids to enhance presentations
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

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Characteristics of Good and Bad Presentations

Good Presentations	Bad Presentations

The Communication Triangle

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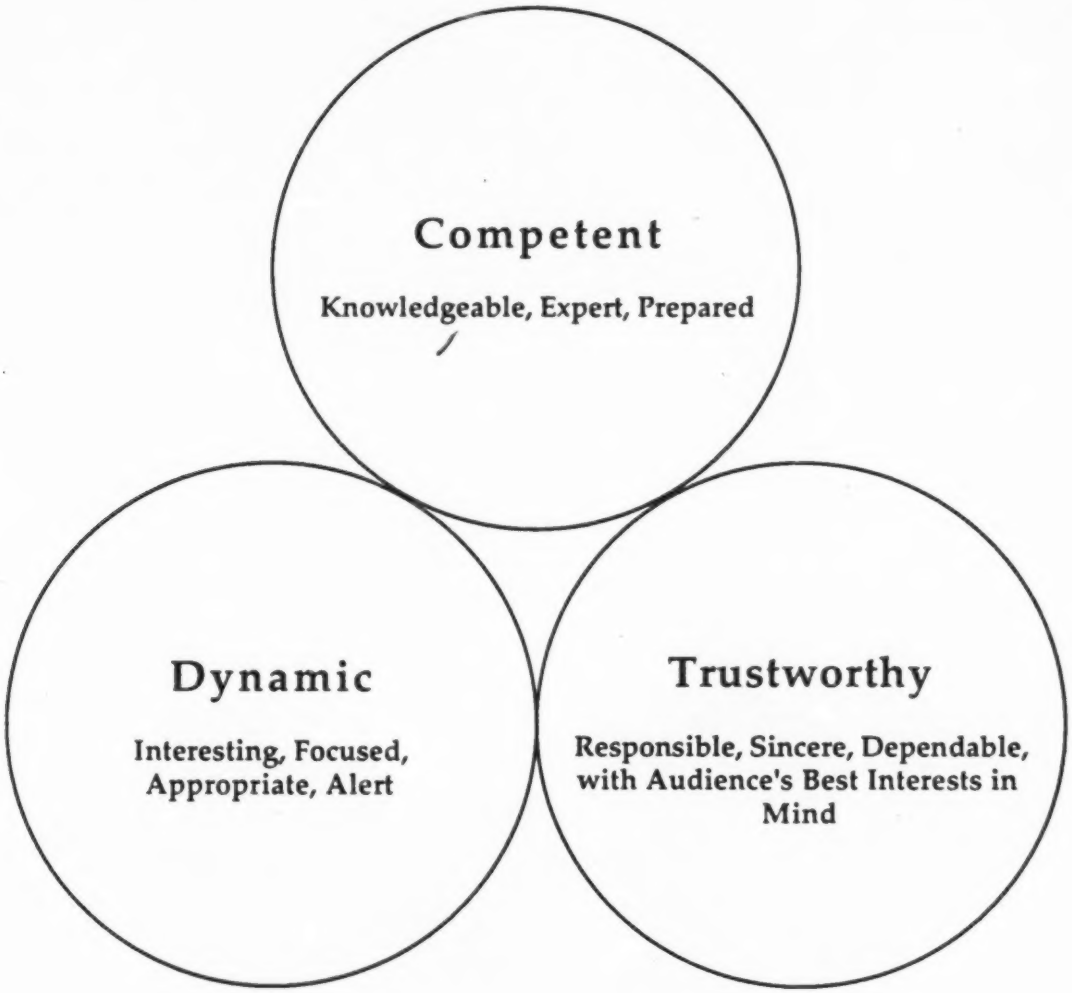
Communicating Credibility

Credibility is how a speaker is perceived in the minds of the audience. What they hear and see is what they think of you.

This is how you want to be perceived:



Getting Started: The Planning Stage

Obviously, you can't just sit down and write out a talk. First you need to find out what you want the talk to accomplish and who will be listening. Think about the following questions:

Purpose: Why am I doing this?

Interesting presentations are those with strong goals or purposes. Every time you try to connect with someone, you do so for some purpose. Purpose lies behind every communication, whether that communication is expressed in writing, in conversation, or through speaking before a group.

A strong sense of purpose will help you make decisions about your presentation:

- Are you going to inform the audience about a topic that is new to them?
- Do you need to build team spirit or cooperative attitudes?
- Will you demonstrate a new procedure to co-workers?
- Do you need to persuade your audience to follow your suggestions for hospital policy?
- Do you need to teach (and does your audience actually need to learn) to do something?

Try to think in terms of action: What you are doing? What is your audience going to do? Move away from thinking about *topic* (what you are talking about) toward thinking about *behavior* (what do you hope will happen; how you will behave in certain ways to influence other people to behave in certain ways).

Don't think of your presentation as separate from yourself. Think of it as the way you are behaving in order to influence others' behavior.

Listeners: Who is my audience?

In addition to thinking about what your purpose is, you need to think about your audience.

- Who will be listening to you?
- Do they already agree with what you are saying or do you need to convince them to agree?
- Will they be hostile to your ideas or mad about having to attend the presentation?
- Will you be wasting people's time by having them attend? What is the payoff for the audience?
- Do they have the same professional knowledge that you do?
- Are there turf issues involved?

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The more you know about your audience, the more you can prepare. Preparing means developing a *strategy* for a successful presentation.

Successful presentations rely on making an appropriate appeal to the character of the audience. You need to be something of a psychologist—imagining how people think and feel and then appealing to their thoughts and feelings in ways that bring about their cooperation. Sometimes you can insist people do things your way because you are the boss. More often, you should probably appeal to people through extending an open hand by saying, "Let's cooperate" or "Let's work together to get this thing done." If you use a cooperative approach, much more will be accomplished and there will be fewer hard feelings

Speaker: Who am I ?

Speaking is performing. It is being on stage. When you are on stage, you must think of yourself as an actor. You need to be entertaining; you need to be animated; you need to be *alive.*

We don't enjoy dead speakers. We don't enjoy monotone voices, frozen faces, or deadpan deliveries. We want action. We want interaction. We want theater.

Nothing is more dreary than listening to a speaker who either doesn't like her topic or who thinks the audience won't like it. The uninterested speaker will drone on, putting herself and the audience to sleep. The speaker who is convinced that the audience is uninterested tends to be timid and apologetic about taking up the audience's valuable time. After a while, the audience will come to agree with her.

Your attitude makes a difference. Think about how you want to be perceived by your audience:

- What kind of person do you want to be?
- Do you have a sense of humor? Are you glad to be up front?
- Do you have strong beliefs? Can you be honest and open about them?
- What does your audience already know about you?
- What can you do to show them you possess good will toward them?
- Are you an authority? Does your audience know this?
- What bridges can you build to your audience?
- What should you reveal about yourself? What is appropriate to reveal in a given situation?

The diagram on Page 5 suggests that you want to be perceived as *competent, trustworthy,* and *dynamic.* Think about speeches you have attended and how those speakers communicated these virtues to you.

Exploring the Communication Triangle

To give to good speech, you need to know enough about your topic to be comfortable with it. It undermines your confidence when you feel you don't really understand what you are talking about.

Take another look at the communication triangle. Notice the left side suggests what *you* know about your topic. Notice the right side suggests what *your audience* knows about your topic. Figure out what the differences are between these two understandings.

First, you should figure out what you already know. Start by jotting down information you have about the topic. Write down any questions you have. Ask if they are relevant and appropriate to your presentation. These questions point toward areas you may need to research.

Next, figure out what your audience knows. Project yourself into their situation. Are there ways you can make use of what they already know? Can you anticipate what they want to know? What can they really use of what you have to offer?

Once you decide what you need to know and balance it with what the audience needs to know, then you can decide *where* to do your research. You may need to go the library, interview several authorities on the topic, or find information in professional books. You may also need to talk with other people or observe a working group in action.

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Planning Worksheet

Decide what topic you are going to use for the presentation in this class and fill out the following Planning Worksheet.

What is the subject of my presentation?

Purpose: Why am I doing this?

- Why am I giving this presentation?
- What do I want my listeners to do?
- What is the most important information I want my audience to remember after the presentation?

Listeners: Who is my audience?

- Who is my audience (age, experience, knowledge, status, situation)?
- What does the audience know about this topic and how does the audience feel about the subject?
- How will listeners use the information I present to them?
- What is my audience's style (formal, remote, proper, casual, friendly, intimate)? Can I adjust to it?

Speaker: Who am I?

- What do they think of me?
- Am I comfortable with these people?
- Do they trust me? Do I need to establish my credibility?
- Do I need to establish my authority?

Subject: What do I have to say about this topic?

- What is interesting about this topic?

- What do I know that they don't know?

- Why will my audience want to hear this speech?

Subject: What do I need to know?

First, jot down what you *already* know about the topic:

Write down any questions you have. These questions show you areas you need to research.

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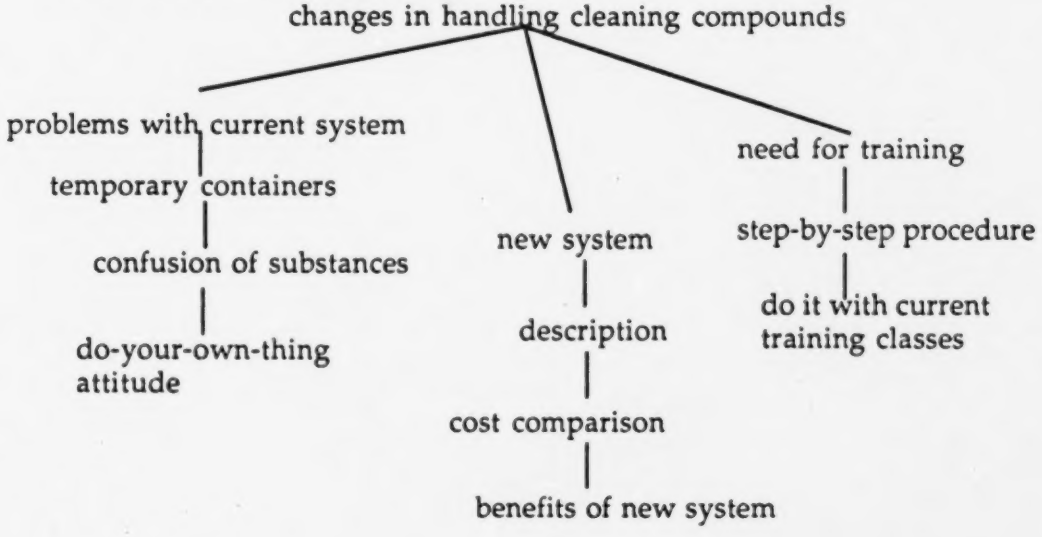
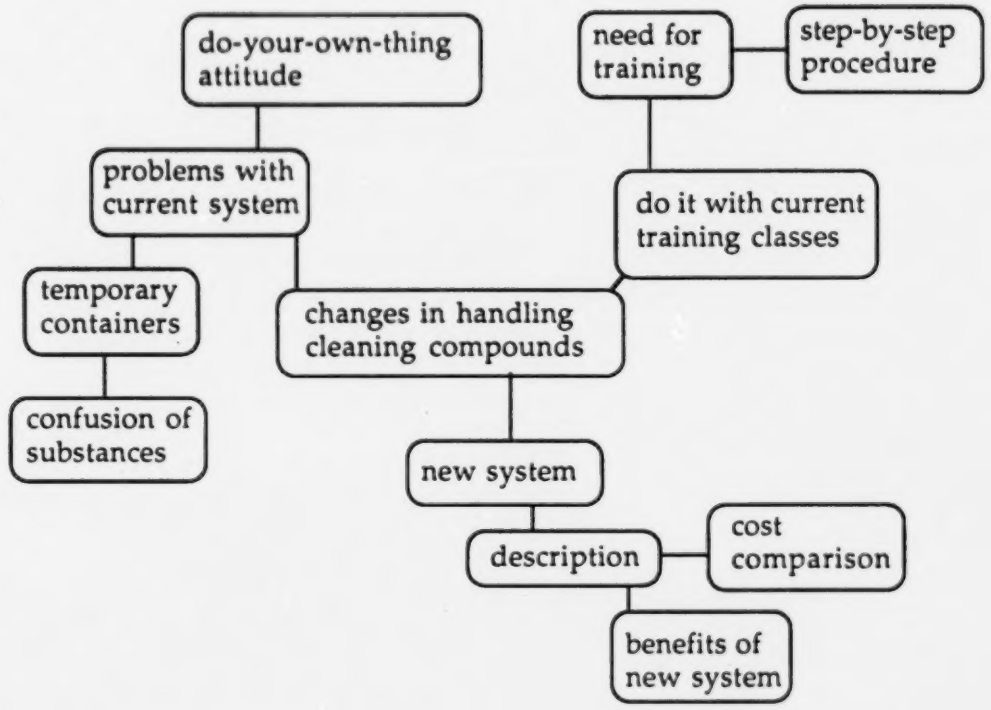
Some Planning Strategies: Generating Ideas for Your Presentation

1. **Brainstorm your topic**: List as many possible ideas, approaches, examples, and strategies as you can. Don't censor yourself—let your writing flow uninterrupted. Then sort and find the good stuff.
2. **Identify keywords**: Try to identify a single word that really captures your problem, your topic, or your task. Or write the headline for your talk.
3. **Imagine different readers' responses**: What would my boss say about this? What would my husband say? What would Sally in the Emergency Room think about this?
4. **Nutshell your topic**: Describe in a sentence or two the purpose and audience of your talk. Try to think in terms of *action*—what it is you want to happen. When you state the purpose, state both your purpose and your reader's purpose.
5. **Tree your topic**: Draw an upside-down tree structure that shows what you intend to say or demonstrate.



6. **Cluster your topic:**



7. **Use creative thinking strategies:**
   - Use metaphor or simile: "Getting physicians to sign the orders is like..."
   - Use another language: How would an accountant describe the situation? Or how would an engineer look at this? Or what would an elderly patient say?
   - Examine your subject from different perspectives: How has it changed over time? What is it like? What would it have to have to be something else? What system is it a part of?
8. **Talk about your situation**: Often just talking about your topic will suggest an approach.
9. **Let your topic simmer on the back burner**: If you can't decide now on a plan, go on to some other activity. Your mind is perfectly capable of working on a problem in the background.
10. **When all else fails, mumble to yourself and stare out the window.**

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Putting Your Presentation Together: The Writing Stage

Creating a rough outline

Once you have planned your presentation and gathered the information you need, it is time to start organizing it. Don't worry about deciding on a formal introduction yet. That can come later. An introduction probably will flow more easily when you establish your content ("How can I know where I am going until I see what I said?").

Start by nut shelling your main idea. If someone came up and asked you what your presentation is about, what one sentence would you say when you answer? That sentence would be your topic or your topic sentence. It might express a desire to persuade, teach, change behavior, gain cooperation, involve people emotionally, or ?

Now you need to support that topic. Decide on 3 or 4 main points that will support your topic.

Here is an example. Suppose you need to give a presentation to the new employees about incident reports. Your topic sentence might be:

> ***Incident reports are important to you and the hospital and should be filled out well.***

Now you need to think about what you should tell a new employee. Your main points might be:

- Introduce incident reports.
- Show why they are important.
- Explain how to fill them out.

Expanding your outline

Now you have a rough outline. You know your topic and what main points you will use to support that topic. Some of these main points will need to be expanded.

You will need to tell your audience information, such as when it is appropriate to fill out an incident report and where the reports are found.

Your audience will also probably want to know why incident reports are important. You can include some of the major reasons:

- An incident report alerts people that something unusual has happened.
- It informs managers of potential risks to patients and staff.
- It reminds the people involved of the details of an incident if it goes to court several years from now.

Your expanded outline with your topic sentence now looks like this:

Correctly filling out incident reports helps protect you and the hospital.

Introduce incident reports

- When are they filled out?
- Where are the forms found?

Show why incident reports are important

- An incident report alerts people that something unusual has happened.
- It informs managers of potential risks to patients and staff.
- It reminds the people involved of the details of an incident if it goes to court several years from now.

Explain how to fill out incident reports

- Be objective.
- Fill them out completely.

You may want to end with how a good incident report should be filled out.

Write an expanded outline for your topic. Include examples, stories, or whatever you can say to make your point. (An example of a more structured outline is on page 25.)

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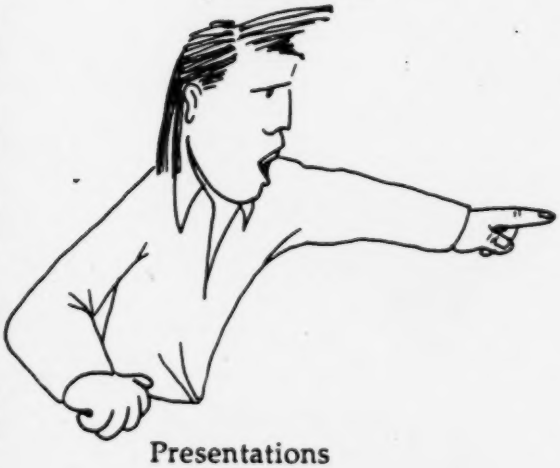
From Outline to Presentation

You need to decide what form you want your speech to be in. Do you feel more comfortable writing out the entire speech, so you know exactly what you want to say? Or do you want to use just an outline of your topic, main points and the evidence for the main points? Or would you like to write the important sentences on notecards and use the note cards to prompt you as you talk? Do you want to speak from a set of visuals? Any of theses strategies work; it depends on what you are comfortable with.

List the advantages and disadvantages of each approach:

	Advantages	Disadvantages
1. Write out the entire speech.		
2. Present from your outline.		



	Advantages	Disadvantages
3. Use a list of 6 or 8 keywords.		
4. Use notecards with each main idea or important detail.		
5. Speak from a set of visuals.		

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Introductions and Conclusions

You may want to write the introduction after you have written the rest of the speech. Then you know exactly what you are going to say and why. You've also had some extra time to think about the question you are going to answer, the clever story you might use to get things started, or the quote that applies to your topic. All three of these ideas are good ways to start a presentation.

Try to avoid starting by saying, "Today I am going to tell you about such and such..." Chances are the audience has heard many speeches that start that way. You need to get your audience interested. Remember the purpose of a good introduction is to gain favorable attention. Be unusual, be yourself, and keep it short.

Things to do in your introduction:

-
-
-
-
-

Your conclusion includes a summary of the main points that you have made. This is important because it is harder to keep track of the main points in a speech than in writing. As a speaker, you need to remind your audience about the main points you have made to help them follow you. The best place to do that is in the conclusion. It's also the best place to deliver the final "punch," a clincher to make sure the audience remembers and acts.

Things to do in your conclusion:

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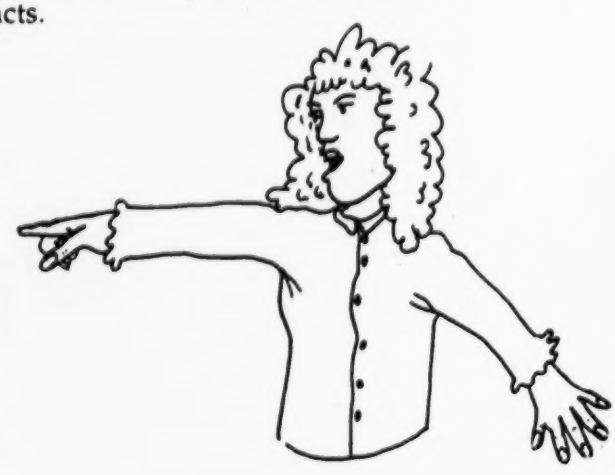

A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words

Pictures, graphs, and slides can save you a lot of words, and they spice up a presentation. Why try to explain what an incident report looks like when you can use an overhead to help you get your point across?

Handouts are very useful because they help your audience follow the points you are making. Also, the audience can refer to the handouts when they need to remind themselves about what you said. Handouts can also encourage listener involvement. That's how we use them in this course—so you can't just sit there. You need to think, talk and write in your book.

As you are gathering your visual aids, ask yourself what sort of handouts would help the audience follow your presentation, keep notes or remember material? Can you present striking data or figures? What can you display rather than say?

Types of visual aids

- flowcharts and diagrams
- key points
- data tables
- graphs
- budgets
- provocative questions
- cartoons
- copies of the procedure or document you are talking about
- examples of the equipment you are discussing

Designing strong visuals

- Keep it simple.
- Keep lists short—seven items maximum.
- Keep lettering large—you should be able to read your visual if you place it on the floor and look down at it.
- Make it professional—learn to use computer tools to produce quality visuals.
- Make the visual do the work—if there is an important figure, bold it; draw an arrow to the key step in the process; circle the projected profit with a bold highlighter,
- Don't read the visual to the audience—they can do that faster than you can.
- Make the visual reinforce or emphasize what you say. Don't use more than is necessary,

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Practicing Your Presentation

Practicing your speech aloud is the best way to polish your delivery. That way you can get used to hearing your voice. Think about the following tips as you practice:

- Practice your presentation out loud several times.
- Be energetic about your presentation.
- Keep your sentences short.
- Vary your tone of voice.
- Avoid speaking too fast.
- Pay attention to how often you say "umm."
- Watch yourself in a mirror.
- Get a friend or family member to be a practice audience.
- Think about what you enjoy about the way others present and use some of their presentation techniques.
- Practice using your visual aids.
- Include humorous remarks.
- Consider what size room you will be in. Should you speak more loudly?

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Polishing the Presentation: the Delivery Stage

Think about bad presentations you have attended. Too often, speakers simply read what they have prepared. But speaking is not reading—it's connecting with an audience. If your audience could read the text of your presentation and understand it all, then you might as well go ahead and give them a paper copy and forget the presentation. People can read faster than you can speak, so why waste their time? Do you like to be read to?

Let's assume you can do things with speaking that you can't do with writing. Imagine how a spoken presentation can be different from a written one. Think about how each can be made personal and interactive. Think about how each can be humorous, lively, and spontaneous. Think about how a spoken presentation allows you to let people get close to you, to see how you think and feel. Can writing do the same?

What can be done well in speaking?	What can be done well in writing?

Preparing for the Big Day

Now it is time to deliver your speech. Here are a few last questions for you to consider to make the big day go more smoothly. Answer the following questions:

- Where will I stand? Where will the audience sit? How will I arrange the room?
- Do I know how to work the microphone or the overhead projector?
- What will I do as my audience enters the room?
- How should I begin?
- What should I do with my hands?
- What should I do with my eyes?
- Are there amusing stories, or scenarios, or anecdotes I could use?
- What questions will I ask to get the audience involved?
- How should I end?
- What do I do if something awful happens?

What Are the Keys to a Strong Presentation?

Everyone is nervous when they stand up to make a presentation. This is why people hate public speaking; they feel those butterflies in their stomach and they decide they don't like it. Those butterflies are useful though. When you make a public presentation, you need the extra energy that those butterflies give you. Energy will make you sound confident and authoritative. It will also make you speak loudly enough to be heard by the people in the last row.

The best antidote to nerves is a strong presentation. Try the following strategies. You will feel in control and comfortable with your audience.

Talk to people as they come into the room: Introduce yourself, chat, get them and you warmed up by beginning with personal interaction.

Don't let your fear take over: If you haven't done a lot of public presentations you may be nervous and frightened. Don't be surprised if your hands or voice shakes a bit. Don't worry about those butterflies in your stomach; they will settle down as you start talking. Take a couple of deep breaths. This will help harness those butterflies. It is a surprise to many speakers that they feel very nervous and think they are conveying a horrible image, while the audience sees someone who is interested and excited about her topic.

Encourage interaction: You can invite people to ask questions or to offer information as you go along. You can say "How many of you have filled out incident reports?" (Wait for hands.) "How many of you *enjoy* filling them out?" (Wait for laughter and no hands and express surprise.) If you know people or feel comfortable, you can challenge audience members: "You seem to disagree with me on this point, Fred." Changing your footing from formal presentation to conversational interaction can really loosen up your presentation and get people actively involved. Of course, it can also lead you off into diversions or arguments or one-sided conversations with a single audience member, so stay in control.

Keep track of time: It is common but unforgivable for someone to use all the time but only get halfway through a presentation. Practicing should allow you to avoid this. A rule of thumb is that 8 double-spaced pages takes 20 minutes to deliver. Don't try to cram too much in. If you have too much to say, write it up and distribute it. Then use your presentation to highlight as you skip the details. Plan time to tell stories or to interact with the audience.

Don't spend too much of your time introducing: You want to be sure you get to the important stuff. Usually, your time is limited. If not, you should still be careful about taking too much time from your listeners. Get off to a brisk start.

Don't read your presentation: Enough said.

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Use your visuals: You can use visuals—foils, overheads, or whatever you call them—to control your nerves, to remember your talk, and to direct your audience's attention to your presentation rather than to you. You can speak very naturally while you and the audience look at a projected image. Visuals can keep the presentation flowing, provide you with ways to use your nervous energy, and give you the chance to say something humorous or witty.

Give yourself positive messages Expect to be a brilliant speaker and avoid dwelling on disaster scenarios. Say to yourself: *I am glad to be here. I'm glad you are here. I care about you. I know that I know!* With these positive affirmations and your well planned talk, you will be terrific.

Look at your audience: Speakers who keep their heads down and read their presentations are boring. Look at your audience to develop rapport, to project better, to gain feedback, and to appear in control. Scan the group for familiar faces nodding in agreement with you. This builds confidence. Engage different sections of the audience as you move from point to point. Remember what it feels like to be talked to but not looked at.

Final Tip: Remember that the audience wants you to succeed. Keep you sense of humor, never attack the audience, and use your smile.

Now you are all set to go. Remember your attitude is very important. If you believe that you have something interesting to say and that the audience will benefit from hearing you, you are half way home.

Peer Response to Presentation Plans

As you review your partner's plans for his or her presentation, be sure to get responses to the following issues:

1. How do you plan to begin? What will you do for audience involvement and interest?

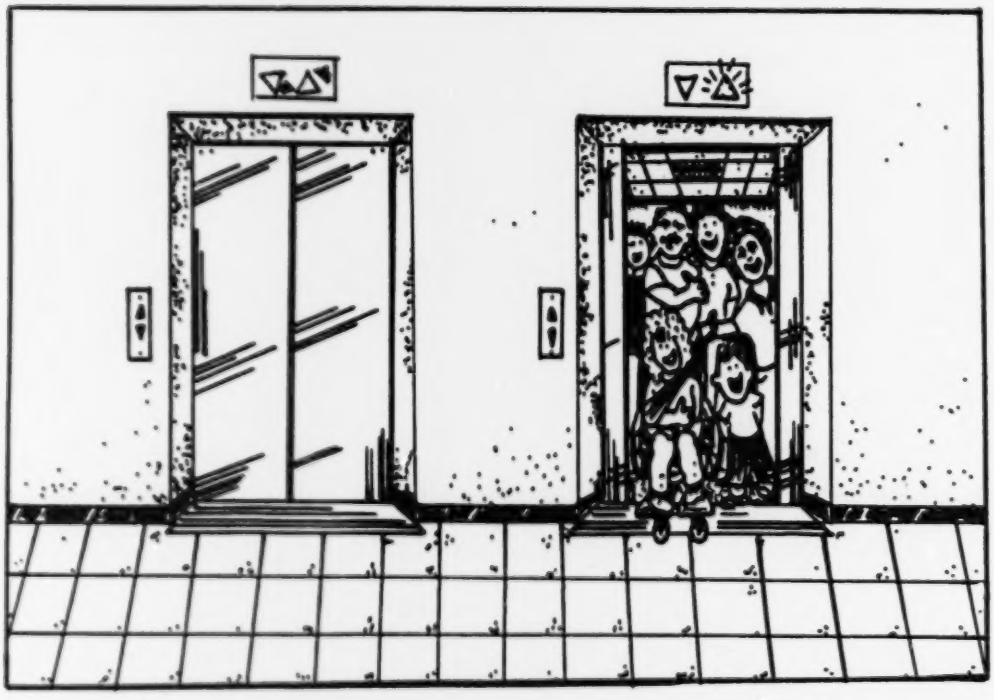
2. How will you make your presentation memorable for the audience? What do you expect the audience to do after listening to you?

3. What visuals will you use?

4. How will you remind yourself of where you are and where you are going?

5. What overall organization are you using? What's the big plan?

6. How can you make a clean exit? How have you planned to end?



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Structured Outline

Although there are several ways to organize your outline, some people prefer to speak from structured outlines. If you are one of those people, the following outline may be helpful. A brief description of each step follows the outline.

I. **Introduction** (gain favorable attention)

Purpose Statement (place before or after Motivator Step)

II. **Motivation Step** (motivate audience members to want to listen)

III. **Credibility Statement** (why are you qualified to speak about topic)

IV. **Preview** (the major points you plan to cover)

A.
B.
C.

V. **Body** (the speech should match the points you covered in Preview)

A.

1.
2.

Transition

B.

1.

a.
b.

2.

a.
b.

Transition

C.

Etc.

VI. **Action Step** (state specific action to be taken)

VII. **Summary** (summarize main points as in Preview)

A.
B.
C.

VIII. **Conclusion** (plan a definite concluding statement)

Introduction: The purpose of a good introduction is to gain favorable attention. Several ways to begin and conclude a speech include:

- Reference to the subject or problem at hand
- Reference to the occasion
- Rhetorical question (not expecting a verbal response)
- Startling statement (can be factual or hypothetical)
- Humorous anecdote

Purpose Statement: Somewhere near the beginning of the presentation should come one clear, simple sentence stating your purpose—exactly what you want your audience to think, believe, feel, or do. This should be so clear that the audience members should be able to repeat it at the end of the presentation.

Motivator Step: This step is often overlooked because speakers assume that the audience will be motivated because they are there. But careful analysis should be given to this step. Why should your audience want/need to hear what you have to say. What is the problem at hand? Why is it significant? You should be able to appeal to each audience member, giving them the impression that this problem affects them as well as others.

Preview: The speaker should preview each major point they will make in the body of the presentation. Both the body of the speech and the summary should match this organizational pattern. The old public speaking adage goes, "Tell them what you are going to tell them. Tell them. Tell them what you told them."

Body: The body of the speech should be a detailed version of the preview. You should support the points you want to make with both logic and evidence. Plan smooth transitions between the major points. The audience should know where you are going next. You may want to use numbers or direction words such as then, next, etc.

Action Step: This may be an optional step. But if there is some specific action you expect as a result of your presentation, make this clear to the audience by telling them what you would like done.

Summary: Briefly summarize the main points you made in the speech. This will help reinforce what you were trying to get across.

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Conclusion: A strong conclusion will be quite effective in leaving the audience with the effect you desire. Plan a definite conclusion, pause, and then take questions.

Effective Presentations
Teacher's Guide

EFFECTIVE PRESENTATIONS was developed by **Step *Ahead***: A Partnership for Improved Health Care Communication. **Step *Ahead*** is funded in large part by the U. S. Department of Education as a National Workplace Literacy Demonstration Project. Our other partners include The New Mexico Coalition for Literacy and seventeen hospitals within the State of New Mexico.

As a demonstration project, we are eager to share these materials with others who are engaged in not-for-profit literacy work. If you would like to use our materials, please write for permission to:

Step *Ahead*
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We gratefully acknowledge the assistance of our partner organizations and especially wish to thank our many students who told us it really did make a difference.

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Dr. Stephen A. Bernhardt and Dr. Paul R. Meyer, Co-Directors

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Introduction

Effective Presentations is a short course in giving presentations developed especially for hospital employees. It is designed to be taught on-site and to complement a hospital's other training and staff development efforts.

Effective Presentations is designed as an 8-hour course, with four two-hour sessions. It can be adapted to other schedules. The course does not offer university credit, but it has been (or is being) approved for continuing education credit for nurses and other health care professionals in New Mexico.

The course is intended to serve a wide variety of health care workers: nursing assistants, dietary staff, housekeeping staff, patient account representatives, medical technicians, nurses, supervisors, low-level supervisors, and other hospital employees. Teachers of the course are encouraged to adapt the course to various mixes of these audiences.

This **teacher's guide** is intended as an aid to teachers of the course, both to those teaching for **Step *Ahead*** and others who may be using our materials in other locations. It explains the philosophy of the course, offers some sample lesson plans, and describes how teachers can adapt the course to make it more work-related and more responsive to different audiences.

Effective Presentations was developed by Paul Meyer and Stephen Bernhardt of New Mexico State University as part of **Step *Ahead*** , a Workplace Literacy Demonstration Project funded primarily by the U. S. Department of Education. **Step *Ahead*** develops and offers short courses in basic skills to employees in New Mexico hospitals. Courses focus on reading, writing, oral communication, teamwork, and problem-solving. **Step *Ahead*** also works with the New Mexico Coalition for Literacy and local literacy groups to establish workplace-related tutoring efforts on site in the workplace.

Philosophy of Effective Presentations

Effective Presentations is based on the premise that many health care workers need good presentation skills. We believe that improving workers' communication skills benefits a hospital, its employees, and its patients. It results in better morale, improved teamwork, and increased efficiency in the hospital. Better communication skills help workers do their jobs better, makes their work more pleasant, and improves their chances for advancement within the hospital. Better communication also results directly in improved patient care. It reduces risk and eliminates costly mistakes and do-overs.

Effective Presentations assumes that many workers need to give short presentations to their work groups in the context of explaining new procedures, demonstrating new equipment, training and orienting new employees, and directing the work of subordinates. The course encourages speakers to define their purposes and audiences. It encourages them to think about what sort of action they hope to accomplish when they speak before a group.

Effective Presentations focuses on helping participants develop control over their own speaking processes. Discussion and exercises take students through a process of analyzing the situation, gathering crucial information, organizing and drafting a presentation, and then revising and editing. The final session has students deliver presentations to a group and gather individual feedback from the other participants and from the teacher.

Effective Presentations uses class discussion, homework activities, and peer evaluation to teach presentation skills. The course is meant to be active, with students relating situations from their workplace. We rely on collaborative revision. We also depend on class discussion to drive much of the learning in the classroom.

What students learn will relate directly to how much energy and attention they give the course, both in class and at home or on the job. The teacher needs to stress that the assignments will take time. People taking the course need to agree to undertake the effort. It costs a lot of money to deliver these courses–students who don't do the work or attend sporadically waste a valuable resource.

The course moves very quickly and students need to stay on track from initial idea for a presentation through delivery. With the exception of the delivery of the presentation on the final day, there is not much chance for practice during class.

Effective Presentations was tested and revised in a hospital setting. Nurses, nursing assistants, patient account representatives, physical and respiratory therapists, secretaries, ward clerks, pharmacists, technicians, cafeteria workers, housekeepers, supervisors, managers, security guards, and foundation officers have taken the course and provided us with feedback for revising it and making it more relevant to their jobs.

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Course goals

Participant Goals

Effective Presentations is designed to improve the presentation skills of participants. Specific goals are listed on page 2 of the coursebook. Participants can add goals for themselves.

Participants should feel that they have benefited from the course. Instructors should pay close attention to course evaluations to see whether participant goals are being met, and should revise the way they teach the course as seems reasonable.

Instructor Role

Most of the time, **Effective Presentations** is taught by a team of two instructors: a lead instructor and an assistant. Two instructors can do a more thorough job of covering the material and allow the class to be divided so that activities like role-playing can be done more efficiently. This is also our primary way of developing new instructors. Assistant instructors learn how to teach the course by working with a master teacher. Two instructors also provide interest for the students, and the inevitable disagreements between the two instructors about particular issues can lead to productive class discussion.

Instructors should try to achieve good attendance levels and full group participation. They should try to get each participant to do the homework assignments. It is especially to make sure participants identify a topic during the first class and stick with it. There simply is not time for procrastination or changing from one topic to another. To the extent possible, instructors should adapt the course to the particular audience they are teaching. Instructors should also maintain good records. They should make sure to administer and collect assessments and course evaluations.

When problems arise, talk with the project coordinators (Bernhardt and Meyer) and/or with the hospital coordinator. Sometimes it might help resolve some issue by meeting with the employee and the employee's supervisor. Generally, problem situations are delicate and it is best to get some advice before moving too quickly. We try to respect employee confidences–we never want to be perceived as reporting on bad behavior to or about supervisors.

Instructors need to convey enthusiasm and belief in the worth and the potential of the students. Many of the outcomes of our instruction have to do with somewhat subjective goals: enhanced self esteem, lessened anxiety about speaking on the job, and a belief that good communication is something to work toward. The course should lead to good feelings toward others in the hospital and a sense that improvement is possible through teamwork. For many adults, getting up in front of a group is the most terrifying activity they can imagine. We are helping people gain a very important skill, one tied to advancement and the delivery of quality health care. We need to do so in ways that are sensitive to the anxieties of adult learners.

The instructors should be personable and animated, displaying a good sense of humor and a genuine interest in the students' well being. Instructors should be professional. As representatives of NMSU, instructors should dress professionally, use professional language, and exercise professional decorum.

When people rate workplace instruction, their first concern is whether the instructors or trainers were entertaining and interesting. Try to be both.

Instructors should act in ways that reflect the best interests of the hospital. They should refrain from damaging personal gossip and they should try to encourage students to act in ways that support the best interests of the hospital. In our classes, information always arises that could be damaging to other workers, to the hospital, or to the relation of hospital to community. In such situations, the privacy and interests of the workers and of the hospital should be protected. It is the teacher's job to keep the class talk professional and productive. No good purpose is served by criticizing a fellow worker with loose talk in class.

When in doubt about what to do with information learned in class or as a result of class contacts, talk with one of the project coordinators (Meyer or Bernhardt) or with the hospital **Step *Ahead*** coordinator. Under no circumstances should compromising information about the hospital or its employees become the subject of gossip or dissemination. Teachers of these courses are on contract to the hospital and owe the hospital every confidence. A hospital's reputation in a community is critical to its success, and our role is to support the hospital and its employees.

Evaluation

For program evaluation purposes, two evaluation questionnaires will usually be used. Students will fill out a course evaluation form specifically targeted at what they learned in **Effective Presentations**. They will also usually complete a second standard course evaluation questionnaire from the hospital. Be sure to know what the situation is and be prepared to administer required evaluations.

Student skills will be evaluated on a feedback instrument designed for the course. Students will receive feedback from each person in the audience and these will be tabulated for reporting on the success of the program. These will be constructed to reflect the presence or absence of specific kinds of learning that are taught in the course:

Did the presentation have a clear purpose?
Did the presentation contain useful information?
Were the beginning and end strong?
Was the speaker loud enough?
Did the speaker appear confident?
Was the manner of delivery appropriate?
What was the overall effectiveness of the presentation?

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Sample Daily Lesson Plans

The following lesson plans are provided as an aid to help teachers plan and budget class time. They do not have to be followed slavishly but do give teachers a good idea of how class time is meant to be spent. Each lesson plan has a brief narrative description of class activities and goals and a temporal outline or plan. Each plan assumes a two-hour class session. For the purposes of exemplification, we assume it takes place from 10:00 to 12:00. Typically, the course will be teamtaught. The team should meet before class and decide who has leadership responsibility for each activity. Some activities work well if one person writes at the board or on a flip chart while the other fields input from the class. Teachers should adapt these lesson plans to their own situations.

Class 1 Introduction to course. What are good presentations?

9:45 Instructors arrive. Get attendance sheets. Set up room. Make sure the overhead works, that there is chalk, pens, or whatever is needed. Greet and talk with students as they arrive.

10:00 Distribute name tags, with first names in large print.

10:05 Instructor introductions. Give a brief overview of the course. Show organization of materials and talk about writing assignments. Ask students to begin thinking now about responses to writing assignments.

10:10 Have participants introduce themselves. Ask such questions of individuals as:

- How often do you have to present before groups?
- Do you like to present?
- What makes you uncomfortable about presenting? What makes you comfortable?

10:25 Discuss course goals (p. 1). Participants are asked to volunteer goals to supplement those listed in the coursebook. Add goals to overhead transparency.

10:35 Discuss features of good and bad presentations. Have them recall past presentations, then list individually what are the characteristics (in their workbooks, p. 3). Share ideas together and create a master list on the transparency.

10:50 Break

11:00 Discuss communication triangle. Use transparencies to work around the triangle. Invite participants to volunteer examples from their work experience. What really happens in a presentation? What happens in

terms of subject? Do speakers share a part of themselves? What does a presentation do to develop relationships? What does it mean to know your audience? How do we know when we are successful reaching an audience?

Move to credibility sheet (p. 5). What does it mean to be credible?

11:20 Topic selection: Get people to identify possible topics they could present on for purposes of the course. Get people to brainstorm and select. Talk about focus: what can be done in 5 minutes. Talk about different sorts of topic purposes: to educate, persuade, solicit cooperation, to move people to action, to insure compliance with regulations, to demonstrate or train on a piece of equipment.

11:40 Get one or two people to identify their presentation topics. Work through one or two individual topics as a class on Getting Started (p. 6). Try to think out loud so people have a model of how to plan.

As time permits, get them started on their individual Planning Worksheet. If you can get them started, they will be molre likely to finish (maybe). It will also create commitment to the chosen topic.

Assign homework. Remind them of the importance of fixing their topic and staying with it. Such is the economy of this course.

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Class 2 Planning the Presentation

10:00 Discuss the Planning Worksheet. Which questions helped them think through their topic? Have several nutshell their purpose. See if they can distinguish between topic (what it is about) and purpose (what they hope to accomplish). This is a difficult distinction for many.

10:15 Generating content: Work through several invention methods using the Planning Strategies (pp.11-12). Try some at the board, focusing on individual presentation topics. Again, try to bring the thinking/planning process into the open by working as a group. Clustering works well here.

10:35 Have each individual select a method of generating content and work through it on their own. If it's comfortable to do so, teachers can circulate and work individually.

10:50 Break

11:00 Introduce outlining. Stress top-down methods–stating three main points, or indicated several major steps, or identifying the major topics to be covered. Work toward informal outline, stressing that it is not the formal requirements of outlines but their usefulness and adaptability that is important here.

11:15 Have people begin mapping an outline..

11:30 Stop the outlining and discuss problems, solutions, strategies, content, tone.

11:40 Look at From Outline to Presentation (p. 15). Fill in advantages and disadvantages. Do on overhead. Get them to begin to commit to a method of presentation.

11:55 Assign homework: finish the outline. Gather necessary content. Begin to plan visuals. Read material on pp. 17-20.

Class 3 Polishing the Presentation

10:00 Have people state how they will speak: from outline, keywords, visuals, etc. Talk about why they chose a certain method.

Discuss Conclusions and Introductions, p. 17. Think through as a group how one might begin in interesting and effective ways. Discuss moves to involve the audience, to appeal to their interests, to remind them of the difficulties of beginning well. Encourage them to follow a close script or memorize the beginning as a way of overcoming nervousness and getting started briskly.

How is a presentation like a love affair: any fool can begin one but it takes a lot of skill to end one successfully. How to exit cleanly?

10:25 Visuals: What makes them effective? What good are props? Look around the room at the options: flip charts, overheads, slides, chalkboard. Why use visuals? How do you get ready to use them well?

10:40 Instructor might make a five minute presentation as an object lesson. Demonstrate how to do this sort of thing well. Have a visual or two ready.

10:55 Break?

11:05 Initiate peer review of presentation plans. Look at "Peer Response to Presenation Plans" (p. 24). The presenter should nutshell the presentation, talk about purpose and audience, discuss beginnings and endings, discuss organization, and describe visuals. Encourage helpful feedback from others in the group.

11:35 Debrief from peer groups. Who has a good plan? Who has a problem they can't fix? Who's got an interesting idea for a visual? Who has planned for audience involvement?

11:45 Discuss Practicing Your Presentation (p. 20) and Preparing for the Big Day (p. 21). Read What Are the Keys to a Strong Presentation (p. 22-3) for homework. Come prepared to deliver at next session.

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Class 4 Presentations

10:00 Answer last minute questions. Make reassurances. Have plenty of Peer Response Sheets handy for people to use. Tell them they will be reviewing each presenter.

10:10 Divide into two groups. Stress keeping on schedule. Find some way to let speakers know when they approach five minutes. After each speaker, have several in the audience volunteer constructive feedback, especially positive. Keep the class moving to finish on time.

11:45 Wrap up. Debrief. Fill out course evaluation.

Customizing the course

- Do what you feel is helpful to the participants. Offer to look over their plans before and after class. Hang around after class to solve problems. Arrive early.
- Encourage interaction: be a friend to the students. Develop a good friendly atmosphere in class. Do everything you can to create a comfort zone for good communication.
- Use praise liberally and criticism judiciously. Offer plenty of compliments: on a good start, on a well organized presenation, on particular words or sentences, on visuals that are well developed.
- Encourage people to tell their stories: what was it like for them to speak in school or before a community group? Who do they know who is a really good speaker? Who at the hospital do they like to listen to? We're in the business of creating strong values for good communication. Personalize the class.
- Getting good work from busy people is a challenge. Your role is to persuade, cajole, pressure, encourage, and praise people for doing the assignments and participating energetically.
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Record Keeping

- Keep good daily records of attendance. Work out the recording methods with the hospital coordinator.
- Make good copies of the evaluation–keep a set for yourself if you like. Read them and make notes of what to do differently in the course.
- Keep notes on how the course goes. If there is too much to accomplish, figure out how to get back on track. Let us know if you think we expect too much on one day and not enough on the other. Let us know about errors in the materials, unforseen problems, or areas we could improve.

Instructor's Notes

Effective Presentations

Day 1:

1. Introductions: Discuss motivations for taking the course; uses of speaking in their areas; past experiences.
2. Course Goals: Discuss course goals and have participants list some of their own.
3. Course overview: Review expectations, scheduling, need for them to choose a topic and develop it for presentation; flip through materials; discuss need for out-of-class work.
4. Good and Bad Presentations: First have them recall past presentations; then list individually what are the characteristics of good and bad presentations; write down characteristics on overhead.
5. Communication Triangle: Discuss relational nature of triangle; show how characteristics of good presentations fit into the triangle; discuss questions the triangle raises about speaker and audience .
6. Work on identifying topic: Brainstorm possible hospital-related topics for presentations.
7. Finish class by introducing Planning Worksheet.
8. Assign work for next session.

Day 2:

1. Planning Worksheet: Discuss topics and Planning Worksheet.
2. Generating Content: Work through various invention methods on whiteboard; try clustering one of their topics, with an eye on generating content and then moving toward patterns of organization; Let them work through their own topic.
3. Introduce Outlining: Discuss outlining and organization; Move students toward organizing and outlining their materials.
4. Write-Up Outline: Give participants remaining time to outline topics.
5. Assign work for next session.

Instructor's Notes

Effective Presentations

Day 3:

1. Introductions and conclusions: what to do?
   Review some interesting ways to begin; stress audience involvement and motivation; encourage them to memorize the first few minutes as a strategy--what is begun well should end well; of course, making a presentation is like a love affair: any fool can begin one but it takes a lot of skill to end one successfully.
2. Visuals: How to do. Stress that visuals can be suggestive in this class, not artistic; go over options for foils, flip chart, chalkboard. Do a short presentation with a visual and see if it helps them remember content.
3. Peer review: Use peer edit worksheet--ask each person to describe their presentation, then to respond to questions from listeners. Try to give each other useful feedback.

Day 4:

1. Divide into groups, if necessary, with five or six in each group. Use feedback sheets and some oral discussion of what people do well, and then, if needed, what they might work on. Ask the speaker how they felt about the presentation. Do a reality check between presenter's self-evaluation and that of the group.
2. Debrief and evaluate the course.